

September 4, 2008

Office of Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger
C/O Assemblymember Jim Beall, Jr.
California State Capitol, Room 5016
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Governor Schwarzenegger:

I am writing to express my support for Assembly Bill 1887 (Beall), the Mental Health and Substance Abuse Parity Bill. This bill requires health insurers to cover mental health and substance abuse illnesses just as they would for any physical illness. Your signature on this bill would benefit an estimated 4 million insured Californians who suffer from mental health disorders or addiction yet find they are unable to obtain treatment through their medical coverage. The cost to help them is minimal: an increase in annual premiums of only \$3 to \$6.

Thousands upon thousands of Californians trapped by a mental health disorder or substance abuse find they are unable to get help because their health insurance won't pay for their treatment. AB 1887 eliminates the unequal and unfair status mental health and substance abuse illnesses have in comparison to the treatment of other health conditions. AB 1887 will rescue thousands of lives and families from the ravages of mental illness and substance abuse while saving taxpayers millions in human service and law enforcement costs.

Fundamentally, AB 1887 is about ending the discriminatory practice of treating physical injuries and diseases with more importance than diseases of the mind and addictions when both are equally devastating and debilitating.

Insurers provide coverage for the early treatment of cancer, diabetes, and other diseases. Why shouldn't we do the same for mental health disorders? Let's help sick people before they sink into the depths of mental illness and substance abuse.

Governor Schwarzenegger, I urge you to sign AB 1887 because it is the right and humane thing to do.

Best regards,

Name
Address